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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Board.....	iii
1. BOOSTING SMES SURVIVAL: DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES IN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES <i>Syahrul Nadwani Abdul Rahman, Norhidayah Ali & Azyyati Anuar</i>	1
2. THE RISE OF GREEN JOBS IN A CHANGING WORLD <i>Nurul Hayani Abdul Rahman, Abidah Saad & Rabitah Harun</i>	5
3. TRUST AND REMOTE WORK: SCHOLARLY VIEW <i>Shakirah Mohd Saad, Rosliza Md Zani & Abd Rasyid Ramli</i>	8
4. SELLING SERVICES: WHAT'S NOT THERE <i>Norhidayah Ali, Azni Syafena Andin Selamat & Suhaida Abu Bakar</i>	11
5. THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS <i>Nurul Izzati Idrus & Nurfaznim Shuib</i>	14
6. THE PRICE OVER-CONTROL: HOW STRICT LEADERSHIP ERODES EMPLOYEE MORALE AND PRODUCTIVITY <i>Rosliza Md Zani, Syukriah Ali & Anita Abu Hassan</i>	18
7. IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY ON MARKETERS AND CONSUMERS <i>Fatihah Norazami Abdullah, Mursyda Mahshar & Norfaizah Md Nasir</i>	21
8. OPTIMISING HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN WITH BLOCKCHAIN-DRIVEN RISK MANAGEMENT <i>Siti Fairuza Hassam</i>	24
9. FOMO AND LIVE STREAMING: A DYNAMIC DUO FOR MODERN MARKETING <i>Nurliyana Abas & Siti Khadijah Rafie</i>	28
10. MICROFINANCE PROGRAM: A POVERTY ERADICATION INITIATIVE <i>Dahlia Ibrahim & Zuraidah Mohamed Isa</i>	32
11. BEATING INFLATION SMARTLY: THE POWER OF UNIT TRUST INVESTMENTS <i>Zuraidah Mohamed Isa, Dahlia Ibrahim & Zaiful Affendi Ahmad Zahib</i>	34
12. BUILDING CUSTOMER TRUST THROUGH ONLINE BUSINESS REVIEWS <i>Ramli Saad, Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad & Yong Azrina Ali Akbar</i>	38
13. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTERMATH OF TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENTS: THE BARRIERS TO RECOVERY AMONG EMPLOYEES <i>Shamsinar Ibrahim, Hasyimah Razali & Norhafiza Mohd Hardi</i>	42

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, digital citizenship education is crucial in preparing individuals to engage in a digital world who have a role both as creators and consumers of digital content. According to Vajen et al. (2023), there are several definitions of citizenship that highlight various viewpoints, aspects, developments, advancements, and discipline distinctions. It is a status and a practice that is linked to both the digital and analogue fields (Isin & Ruppert, 2020). Digital citizenship conceptualizations can be defined as it connecting digital media to civic education and citizenship (Chong & Pao, 2022; Kenner, 2020). The idea of "digital citizenship" refers to using digital technologies and the internet in a way that is safe, moral, and responsible (Isdendi et al., 2023). This knowledge is frequently integrated into school curricula, industry training programs and community projects to make sure people of all ages have the knowledge and skills to navigate the complexities and challenges of the digital era. Digital citizenship might be attained through a variety of educational methods (Vajen et al., 2023). In recent years, a few digital citizenship education curricula have been created at different educational levels (Chong & Pao, 2022). This education would assist and guide all education stakeholders, particularly policymakers, educators, parents and learners. According to Lcom Team (2024), there are some reasons digital citizenship education is important towards students such as safety, integrity, future-readiness and participation.

IMPORTANCE

For the first reason, safety is important in digital citizenship education because it can help them prevent from participating in harmful situations. Since more students have access to digital devices, taking precautions to keep them safe is essential (Althibyani & Al-Zahrani, 2023). When the students know how to engage properly and safely online, this would lead to less chance of encountering dangerous situations or participating in a risky activity. Digital security covers both technological methods, such as firewalls and antivirus software, and information protection procedures to practice a safe and secure use of digital information (Ribble & Miller, 2013). Based on the study by Martin et al. (2021), discovered that the parents' primary concerns regarding their children's internet safety were that their children would be exposed to sexual content and engage in conversation with strangers.

Besides that, the second reason digital citizenship education is important to students is integrity. This can shape the ethical behavior of students in their educational progress. Students who have developed a sense of digital ethics are better able to understand the importance of honesty and integrity in their academic work. Through initiatives for education and awareness, they may encourage appropriate online behavior by highlighting the virtues of integrity,

empathy, and respect (Isdendi et al., 2023). Respecting people, learning how to utilize technology in a civil and efficient manner, and adhering to digital etiquette are all characteristics of good digital citizenship behaviour (Ribble, 2012). Respecting intellectual property rights and copyright is a crucial component of cyber ethics (Prasetiyo et al., 2022).

Future readiness is also important in digital citizenship education towards students. Significant advancements in technology have sparked changes in education and teachers in the twenty-first century need to be more adaptable, inquisitive, and forward-thinking (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). It is about equipping them with the knowledge and abilities they need to thrive in this new environment and fostering in them the confidence to put those talents into practice (Zamora & Zamora, 2022; Yusuf, 2022). From this, students must be capable of being prepared for their future academic and professional endeavours, since both higher education and the workplace depend more on digital technology. With better learning and preparation in education, it can help students to be ready for their careers. Digital citizenship helps individuals be accountable for lifelong learning and prepares them for their future (Abdellatif et al., 2024).

Finally, another reason for digital citizenship education is to encourage active participation. According to Shi et al. (2023), the widespread use of technology and the Internet affects citizens' civic engagement which needs to be explored in this information age. Becoming an effective and responsible community member is essential for becoming a good digital citizen in a society where many social issues are debated and resolved online which also reflects life as a student. By using technologies, lecturers and students engaged in online sessions for e-learning, finished homework, and communicated with each other (Prasetiyo et al., 2023). This digital access also involves complete electronic engagement in society, guaranteeing equitable access to technology for all people especially students to enhance their capabilities (Tan, 2011).

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, digital citizenship education is not merely an optional addition to a student's curriculum but an essential component for their holistic development in today's interconnected world. This development of digital citizenship education has become one of the important knowledge and skills that students should have to practice digital citizenship in an increasingly digital society to ensure it will align with their educational background. Implementing a responsible mentality into students' technological interactions is just as important as providing them with rules on how to behave as decent digital citizens. It enables them to utilize digital tools and platforms in a secure situation, encouraging them to feel empowered and to comprehend the cultural and societal effects of digital technology. This was supported by the results of findings from Abdellatif et al. (2024), which highlight how crucial it is to incorporate digital citizenship instruction into academic courses from an educational standpoint. According to Djamzuri and Mulyana (2022), it is crucial that the creation of digital citizens, governmental organizations, academic institutions, and industry players collaborate together to improve digital literacy programs, given that they recognize the influence that these abilities have on social, economic, and environmental dimensions.

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